

# Dear Devotees, Its “Rāma” not “Rāmo”!

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains that *niyamas*, or rules, are of two kinds – *vidhis*, or prescriptions, and *niṣedhas*, or prohibitions. Whatever is enjoined as one’s duty is a prescription. Whatever is enjoined as restricted is a prohibition.

There are many *vidhis*, or prescriptions, for chanting “Rāma” within the *mahā-mantra*. And we would like to share a few of them with you.

## ***Vidhis* from Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Prabhupāda**

These three words, namely *Hare*, *Kṛṣṇa*, and *Rāma*, are the transcendental seeds of the *mahā-mantra*. The chanting is a spiritual call for the Lord and His energy to give protection to the conditioned soul. This chanting is exactly like the genuine cry of a child for its mother’s presence. Mother *Harā* helps the devotee achieve the Lord Father’s grace, and the Lord reveals Himself to the devotee who chants this *mantra* sincerely. No other means of spiritual realization is as effective in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy as the chanting of the *mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. – **The Science of Self-realization**



We have to practice: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. In this way, unconsciously or consciously, if we simply can remember Hare Kṛṣṇa, then our life is successful. This is a most scientific method. Simply if we can remember... It doesn’t require how far we are educated, how far we are scholar, no. *Ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*.

– Śrīla Prabhupāda Lecture, ŚB 1.5.11, New Vṛndavana, June 10, 1969



Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura describes the Lord’s instructions to Tapana Miśra in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (1.14.143-147) as follows:

Everything is accomplished by *hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana*, including the goal of life (*sādhya*) and the means for its attainment (*sādhana*). In this age of Kali, the only means for deliverance is the chanting of the names of Hari. There is no other way, there is no other way, there is no other way. “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.” This verse of names is called the *mahā-mantra*. It contains sixteen names of the Lord, consisting of thirty-two syllables. Chanting this *mantra* again and again will awaken the sprout of *prema* within the heart, and thus the goal of life and the means for its attainment is understood.



The following famous instructions of Śrī Caitanya are related in the *Caitanya-bhāgavata* (Madhya 23.75-78):

The Lord ordered everyone in great joy: “Listen to the *kṛṣṇa-nāma mahā-mantra*: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare.” The Lord said: “I have spoken the *mahā-mantra*. Perform *japa* of this *mantra* a prescribed number of times. All perfection will be attained through this. Chant this *mantra* every moment – there is no other rule.”



Of all sacrifices, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare is the purest representation of Kṛṣṇa.

– Bg 10.25 p



Remembrance of Kṛṣṇa is not possible for the impure soul who has not practiced Kṛṣṇa consciousness in devotional service. Therefore one should practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness from the very beginning of life. If one wants to achieve success at the end of his life, the process of remembering Kṛṣṇa is essential. Therefore one should constantly, incessantly chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Lord Caitanya has advised that one be as tolerant as a tree (*taror iva sahiṣṇunā*). There may be so many impediments for a person who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nonetheless, tolerating all these impediments, one should continue to chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, so that at the end of one's life one can have the full benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

– Bg 8.5 p



Lord Caitanya has announced, according to the scriptural injunctions for this Age of Kali, that in this age no process of realizing the Supreme is possible except the chanting of the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

– Bg 8.11 p



Those who have accepted the task of spreading the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness should take this opportunity to deliver people very easily from the clutches of material existence. Our duty, therefore, is to follow the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and preach the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world very sincerely. This is the best welfare activity for the peace and prosperity of human society.

– ŚB 8.5.23 p



One should chant the holy names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—either individually or with others. Lord Caitanya has given special stress to chanting of these holy names of the Lord as the basic principle of spiritual advancement. – **ŚB 3.29.18 p**



To worship Lord Caitanya. *Kṛṣṇa-varṇam tviṣākrṣṇam* (ŚB 11.5.32) indicates that prominence should be given to the name of Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya taught Kṛṣṇa consciousness and chanted the name of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, to worship Lord Caitanya, everyone should together chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. – **CC Ādi 3.52 p**



When Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya asked the Lord which item was most important, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu immediately answered that the most important item is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. – **CC Madhya 6.241 p**



As preachers of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, we first offer our obeisances to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by chanting this *Pañca-tattva mantra*; then we say Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. There are ten offenses in the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, but these are not considered in the chanting of the *Pañca-tattva mantra*, namely, *śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya prabhu-nityānanda śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is known as *mahā-vadānyāvatāra*, the most magnanimous incarnation, for He does not consider the offenses of the fallen souls. Thus to derive the full benefit of the chanting of the *mahā-mantra* (Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare), we must first take shelter of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, learn the *Pañca-tattva mahā-mantra*, and then chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. That will be very effective. – **CC Ādi 7.4 p**



Our request to all our students is that they daily chant at least sixteen rounds of this *harer nāma mahā-mantra* (Cc. Ādi 17.21) offenselessly, following the regulative principles. Thus their success will be assured without a doubt. – **CC Ādi 17.23 p**



Chanting is very simple, but one must practice it seriously. – **CC Ādi 17.32 p**

## ***Vidhi from Ancient Śāstra***

“The words “**Hare Kṛṣṇa**” are repeated twice, and then “**Kṛṣṇa**” and “**Hare**” are both separately twice repeated. In the same way, “**Hare Rāma**”, “**Rāma**” and “**Hare**” are twice repeated.”

The *mantra* is thus: Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. – Sanat-Kumāra-saṁhitā



In the *Rādhā-hṛdya-Khaṇḍa* of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, Romaharṣana Suta prays to Śrī Vedavyāsa as follows:

***yat tvayā kirtitam nātha hari-nāmeti sanjitam  
mantram brahmāpadam siddhi karam***

O master, O mighty one! Please glorify the *harināma mantra* situated in transcendence, the cause of all perfection!

In reply, Śrī Vedavyāsa gives the following instruction:

***grhanād yasya mantrasya dehi brahmāmayo bhavet  
sadhyah pūtah surāpo ‘pi sarvāsiddhi-yuto bhavet  
tad-aham te bhidhāsyāmi mahābhāgavato hamsi***

***hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare***

***iti ṣoḍasakam nāmnām tri-kāla kalmaṣāpaham  
nātah parataropāyah sarva vedeṣu vidhyate***

The embodied soul who accepts this *mantra* will become filled with transcendence, and by accepting it, even a drunkard will attain all perfection. I will recite this *mantra* to you, for you are a swan-like *mahābhāgavata*. “Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare”. These sixteen names can destroy the sins of the three worlds, and nothing higher than them is to be found in all the *Vedas*.



The *Kali-santaraṇa Upaniṣad*, part of the *Yajur Veda*, states:

***hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare  
iti ṣoḍasakam nāmnām kali-kalmaṣa-nāsanam  
nātah parataropāyah sarva-vedeṣu drśyate***

“The sixteen names of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* — Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare — destroy the iniquities of the Kali age. This is the ultimate conclusion of all the *Vedas*.”



The *Caitanya-upaniṣad* (verses 11-12), part of the *Atharva Veda*, tells us that the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* is made up entirely of Kṛṣṇa’s names:

*svanāma-mūla-mantreṇa sarvaṁ hlādayati vibhuḥ  
sa eve mūlam-mantram japatī haririti kṛṣṇa iti rāma iti*

The name of God is the root of all *mantras*, a splendid thing that brings joy to all. This root *mantra* is chanted with the words “**Hari**”, “**Kṛṣṇa**”, and “**Rāma**”.

“Hari” is He who removes the knot in the heart in the form of material desire. One can unite with the Lord by remembering the root *kṛṣ* and the suffix *ṇa*, which gives us the ultimate hymn of praise: “Kṛṣṇa”. “Rāma” is He who gives pleasure to everything and is the form of bliss.”



The *Ananta-saṁhitā*, another ancient text, tells us:

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare  
ṣoḍāśaitāni nāmāni dvātriṁśad varṇakāni hi  
kalau yuge mahā-mantraḥ sammato jīva-tārane  
varjayitvā tu nāmaitad durjanaiḥ parikalpitam  
chando-baddham susiddhānta-viruddham nābhyaset padam  
tārakam brahma-nāmaitad brahmaṇā guruṇādinā  
kali-santaraṇādyāsu śruti-svadhigataṁ hareḥ  
prāptam śrī-brahma-śiṣyeṇa śrī-nāradena dhīmatā  
nāmaitad uttamam śrauta-pāramparyeṇa brahmaṇaḥ  
utsrjyaitan-mahā-mantram ye tvanyat kaepitam padam  
mahā-nāmeti gāyanti te śāstra-guru-laṅghanaḥ  
tattva-virodha-sanprkṛtam tādrśam daurjanam matam  
sravathā parihāryam syād ātmā-hitārthinā sadā  
hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare  
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

“Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare”. This sixteen-name, thirty-two syllable *mantra* is the *mahā-mantra* in the age of Kali, and it is by this *mantra* that all living beings can be delivered. One should never forsake this and adopt other so called religious processes practiced by less qualified souls. Nor should one chant concocted combinations of Kṛṣṇa’s names that contradict the pure conclusions of the scriptures or are filled with incongruent emotions. Regarding this divinely spiritual *mahā-mantra*, which frees one from material existence, the original guru, Lord Brahma, has said, “The *Kali-santarāṇa Upaniṣad* has declared this *mantra* to be the best means of deliverance in the age of Kali”. Having heard all this from Brahma, his sons and disciples, beginning with Nārada, all accepted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* and, having meditated on it, attained perfection.



Without Hari, there is no other means to eradicate the sins of the age of Kali, and therefore it is essential to reveal the name of Hari (*harināma*) in order to deliver the world. By this chanting, people all over the world can be released from the worst sins of the age of Kali. First one should twice chant “**Hare Kṛṣṇa**”, then twice “**Kṛṣṇa**”, then twice “**Hare**”, then twice “**Hare Rāma**” and in the end, O Mahādevī, one should chant “**Rāma**” twice, and then “**Hare Hare**”. In this way one should pronounce Lord Kṛṣṇa’s *mahā-mantra*, which destroy all sins.

– **Brahmā-yāmala-tantra**



“Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare”. O best of sons, this is how you should chant these thirty-two syllables and sixteen names in the age of Kali. Every human being should hear this *mantra*, which bestows all boons.

– **Rādhā-tantra**

*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare  
Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare*